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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5741  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000076

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [RS](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA PERMREP DISCUSSES UNOMIG WITH AMBASSADORS  
RICE, WOLFF AND DICARLO

REF: USUN 70

Classified By: AMBASSADOR SUSAN RICE FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) and (d)

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador Rice told newly arrived Georgian PermRep Lomaia that Russia was tying extension of UNOMIG's mandate to Abkhaz formal participation in a UNSC meeting under Rule 39. Participation in an Arria-format meeting might be a compromise option to preclude their formal attendance. Rice asked Lomaia whether keeping a UN presence in Georgia/Abkhazia was important enough to the Georgians to grant an Arria-format meeting, and she urged Lomaia to respond quickly with Tbilisi's views. She cautioned Lomaia that the U.S. wanted Tbilisi's perspective, but would formulate its own views on the issue in consultation with other Council members. Rice told Lomaia her soundings of European members suggested retaining a UN presence to complement the EUMM was important to Europe, and that they generally favored an Arria-format meeting as a small price to pay for a rollover. She suggested an Arria-format meeting would be a better option for Georgia than official participation under Rule 39. Ambassador Lomaia, who is leaving New York today, and will not return until February 20, said he would immediately seek instructions from Tbilisi and that his Charge would respond to USUN. END SUMMARY.

[¶2.](#) (U) Newly arrived Georgian PermRep Alexander Lomaia and Deputy PermRep Irakli Chikovani paid a call on Ambassadors Rice, Wolff and DiCarlo on January 30 to discuss U.S. and Georgian approaches to the February 15 mandate expiration of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). (This cable covers the entire meeting, but Ambassadors Wolff and Rice were only present for parts of the session.) Ambassador Lomaia has been in New York for a week and has not yet presented his credentials. He is leaving New York on January 31 and will not return until February 20-- after the expiration and possible extension of UNOMIG.

[¶3.](#) (C) Ambassador Lomaia said that overall he thought the draft resolution, which had been shared with Georgia by USUN and the German Mission, was a good starting point for talks. (See Reftel para 12 for text of draft resolution.) Georgia had some specific comments on the draft that had already been shared among experts, such as concern about the name of the mission as it appears in the resolution (UN Mission) and weak language on the right of return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Lomaia also wanted to find a way to remove the reference to the Moscow Agreement without removing the symmetrical security zones which were incorporated by reference.

[¶4.](#) (C) In answer to a question by Ambassador Rice about how much value the Georgians placed on the UN mission, Lomaia said Georgia wants the UN presence to continue, since it allows continuous interaction with the separatists and some degree of monitoring. The previous mandate also served to prevent a Russian military buildup along the administrative border, and helped to prevent actions that would deprive the population of freedom of movement. However, Lomaia said

there were limitations on what Georgia could accept as a price for a rollover. He would not want separate missions in Sukhumi and Tbilisi, a change of the name of the mission, or Abkhaz participation in a Council meeting.

15. (C) Lomaia said he was aware that Russia had threatened to make cooperation on a rollover conditional upon a Council invitation for Abkhaz de facto authorities to participate in the Security Council meeting under Rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. He said he had already spoken with the Austrians, Japanese and Turks who, he said, told him that they would vote "no" if the Russians were to raise the issue. Lomaia said he was making the argument to Council members that an invitation to the Abkhaz would discourage them from participating in the ongoing Geneva talks, and that we should maintain pressure on the Abkhaz to participate in that forum, where all regional communities are represented. He thought even their participation in an Arria-format meeting would be perceived as a diplomatic victory and would take them "one step forward toward full recognition." Since the Geneva talks have not yet successfully addressed fundamental issues, an invitation to an Arria-format meeting in New York would reward Abkhaz intransigence, he said. It would also set a precedent and would open a door for their participation in New York that would never close, mentioning the fact that Kosovar leaders now participate in Council meetings under Rule 39.

16. (C) Ambassador Rice said her soundings of the European members of the Council indicated they wanted the UN mission to continue, and would want the U.S. to grant visas for an Arria-format meeting if that would keep a UN presence on the

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ground. Absent a U.S. decision to allow an Arria-format meeting, the Europeans would likely be inclined to grant the Abkhaz participation under Rule 39 in order to keep the mission. She urged Lomaia to consult with Tbilisi on whether keeping the mission would be worth an Arria-format meeting, and to respond to the U.S. quickly. She cautioned that the U.S. would make its own decision in consultation with other Council members.

17. (C) Ambassador DiCarlo added that our longer term goal is to get a more robust UN mandate in Georgia. If we were to allow the UN mandate to lapse, it would be very difficult to reconstitute it later. We had been prepared to offer the compromise of an Arria meeting in October 2008, and had consulted closely with former Georgian PermRep Alasania when we were considering the possibility. In the end it turned out not to be necessary, since the Russian invasion, recognition of independence, and the humanitarian and human rights concerns were still fresh in the Council's minds. DiCarlo also pointed out that the Kosovo and Abkhazia situations are not synonymous. There are nine recognizers of Kosovo in the Council, but only one recognizer of Abkhazia-- even if visas were granted for an Arria meeting, there would be no forward momentum to allow them to participate in an official Council meeting.

18. (C) Ambassador Chikovani asked whether there had been any discussion of Georgian participation in the adoption. The Georgians had previously been invited to participate, but when SCR 1839 was adopted in October 2008, under an arrangement agreed to between the U.S., Russia and other members, only Council members were permitted to participate. Georgia had always been invited in the past, and would consider it helpful to be present for the adoption. He suggested Georgia might also want to invite the leader of the Abkhaz Government in Exile to sit with their delegation in the Council for an adoption, since this could counterbalance the positive press Abkhaz representatives might garner from an Arria-format meeting. Ambassador DiCarlo said she thought it would be difficult to get agreement on that, but we would keep it in our minds when considering options.  
Rice